

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Representative Ralph Tanner at 9:00 a.m. on February 15, 2000 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: A quorum was present

Committee staff present: Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes  
Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department  
Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department  
Renaë Jefferies, Revisor of Statutes  
Linda Taylor, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Representative Tom Sloan  
Representative Kent Glasscock  
Bill Seidl  
Dr. Gary George, Superintendent, Olathe  
Craig Grant, KNEA  
Mark Tallman, KASB  
Diane Gjerstaad, Wichita Public Schools

Others attending: See Attached List

Hearings on **HB 2719 - State educational institution, tuition waivers for graduate student receiving national fellowships** were opened.

Representative Tom Sloan, sponsor of the bill, appeared before the committee as a proponent of **HB 2719**. Representative Sloan stated that passage of this bill will not require the spending of additional State funds, but it will allow our universities to successfully compete with out-of-state schools, and its passage is desired by the faculty and university presidents.

Hearings on **HB 2719** were closed.

Representative Light moved to pass **HB 2719** favorably. Representative Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Hearings on **HB 2796 - School districts, early childhood education programs** were opened.

Representative Kent Glasscock appeared before the committee as a proponent of **HB 2796**. (Attachment 1) Representative Glasscock stated that early childhood education is the key to success in education. He also stated that at-risk students stand to benefit enormously from early programs. Representative Glasscock further commented that Kansas schools can give children the keys to successful futures and prepare our youth for the challenges in life by targeting our resources on the early years. Representative Glasscock then stood for questions.

Bill Seidl also appeared before the committee as a proponent for **HB 2796**. He stated that full day kindergarten has definite benefits, however funding is a key issue. He would like to see full day kindergarten funded for all Kansas students because the future of education depends on early childhood programs.

Dr. Gary George appeared before the committee with comments on **HB 2796**. He stated that, while he sees and acknowledges the benefits of early childhood educational programs, he has a number of concerns. (Attachment 2) He feels that funding issues should be addressed fully.

Craig Grant appeared before the committee with comments and concerns regarding **HB 2796**. He stated that while his organization (KNEA) applauds the effort to give at-risk students a healthy educational start

in school, they have a problem with the portion of the bill that calls for the collection of fees for some participants in the full day program. (Attachment 3)

Mark Tallman appeared before the committee with further comments on **HB 2796**. He stated that his organization, KASB, is in favor of a full day program but has some concern over the funding, which comes in the form of grants rather than guaranteed funding. It is their belief that the 'working poor' would be left out of full day programs because of difficulty in paying the fees. They would like to see the mandate removed from the bill and the final responsibility for such programs left to the local school boards. (Attachment 4)

Diane Gjerstaad appeared before the committee as a proponent of **HB 2796**. She stated that she supports the expansion of the four-year-old at-risk numbers and the implementation of a full day kindergarten program. However, she also stated that she feels the bill, as written, has several policy issues that she could not agree with. Among them are the question of mandates without adequate funding, the idea that full day kindergarten somehow costs less than higher grades, and the fact that grants for pre kindergarten and full day kindergarten funding are competitive. (Attachment 5)

Hearings on **HB 2796** were closed.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2000.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.



KENT GLASSCOCK

MAJORITY LEADER  
State Capitol, Room 381-W  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1504  
(785) 296-7662  
kentglasscock@house.state.ks.us



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
62nd District  
P.O. Box 37  
Manhattan, Kansas 66505  
(785) 776-5353, Ext. 108

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**Testimony**  
**Submitted by**  
**House Majority Leader Kent Glasscock**  
**to the House Education Committee**

Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice-Chair, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear today in support of HB 2796. This bill is a part of the Glasscock-Tanner education reform plan focusing on a child's early years of education.

Research shows early childhood learning is key to future success in school. The Carnegie Corporation's studies indicate children with quality preschool and adequate preparation have a significantly better chance of achieving at high levels than those children without it. Pre-school, coupled with all-day Kindergarten, puts children on the right trajectory for their futures. In fact, studies show full-day Kindergarten significantly increases oral language development, early mathematics and beginning literacy skills.

This bill calls for Kansas elementary schools to offer a fully-funded half-day early learning program for at-risk 4-year-olds to be utilized by parent choice. It also calls for Kindergarten classes to be extended to full days for all children whose parents would like the opportunity for their child. The state will fund the extra half-day of Kindergarten for at-risk students and allow school districts to charge attendance fees for the cost of the additional half-day from parents of students who are not at-risk.

Why fund only the at-risk students? There are two reasons for this. First, we are in the midst of a budget shortfall, and we need to prioritize our spending. Second, research has shown that early childhood education pays off in the long run for all children, but especially for disadvantaged students. In particular, studies show that, as adults, at-risk students in preschool had fewer arrests, and that drug dealing crimes dropped as well. The women had significantly fewer out of wedlock births and both men and women needed fewer special education classes. One study found pre-school programs return an estimated \$7.16 for every dollar spent. All-day Kindergarten has equally impressive results for at-risk children.

By targeting our resources on the early years, Kansas schools can give children the keys to successful futures and prepare our youth for the challenges in life. The time for this reform is now. Kansas cannot afford to sit back and accept the status quo. We will need a more highly educated and skilled workforce than ever before if we want to continue economic viability in the expanding global economy. The world is changing, and we have a responsibility to help parents make sure their children are ready for it. A strong start with early childhood education will mean a better future for all Kansans.

Thank you.

House Education  
2-15-00  
Attachment 1

Testimony for House Education Committee  
House Bill 2796  
February 15, 2000  
Dr. Gary George  
Olathe School District 233

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak with you about House Bill 2796. This bill requires school districts to develop and maintain early childhood programs and it authorizes the collection of fees for the maintenance of full-day kindergarten programs.

There is a substantial body of research that demonstrates the benefits of such programs. The goals of this bill, to create such programs for students, are laudable. However, we do have some concerns and want to share with you some of the implications of this bill if it becomes law.

- House Bill 2796 mandates that school districts develop and maintain an early childhood program that includes four-year-old at-risk students and all day kindergarten for at-risk kindergartners and other children.
- We would have to employ a number of additional staff.
- The Olathe School District would need a school bond issue to build additional classrooms. We do not have the luxury of available classrooms. This would create a substantial impact on our local taxpayers.
- The school district would have the cost of contracting staff, but attendance on the part of children is optional. If some families drop out, then the fees collected may not cover the cost of the program and the difference in cost would have to be paid from the general fund.
- This bill places school districts in the position of collecting for instruction. If families fail to make payments, the school district is in the position of denying service or underwriting the costs with scholarships, etc. More staff time would be devoted to fee collection in many of our schools.
- In some cases, we would have to provide transportation.

House Education  
2-15-00  
Attachment 2

- Some districts may receive grants for this program. However, if a district does not receive grants then money would have to be transferred from the general fund to cover the cost of this program.

In conclusion, it seems to us that if the legislature believes that all at-risk children should have a year of preschool and full-day kindergarten, then it should be properly funded. These students should be included in the definition of pupil and weighted accordingly. We would still have a major space concern, but including preschool at-risk four year olds and kindergartners in the definition of pupil and weighting them would help with the operating costs of the program. The space issue would still be a major problem and because of the mechanics of conducting a school bond election the facilities would be subject to voter approval and would take considerable time to bring on line.

Thank you.



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 W. 10TH STREET / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Craig Grant Testimony Before  
House Education Committee  
Tuesday, February 15, 2000

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am Craig Grant and I represent Kansas NEA. I appreciate this chance to visit with the House Education Committee on three bills of interest to our association. To save your time and paper, I have combined my thoughts on all three bills in the same written testimony.

House Bill 2719 would seek to give tuition and fee waivers to national fellowship recipients, whether or not these graduate students are residents of Kansas. We believe that this bill could be a recruiting tool for the universities of the state to get high performing students into our graduate programs. We do a good job now recruiting some of the best into our regent's schools; however, the chancellor and presidents certainly could use this bill to "close the deal" on certain students. These students may finish their degrees and decide to stay in Kansas – some of them certainly do that now. They won't stay if they do not come here in the first place. Even if they do not stay, during the period of time they were here, they improved the university's academic atmosphere. We hope you pass HB 2719.

The second bill, HB 2796, allows at-risk preschool students to be counted as ½ student and full-day kindergarten students to be counted as one FTE if they are at-risk. We applaud this effort to give these students a "healthy start" in our schools. The rewards will certainly be worth the investment. Our problem with the bill remains the payment of fees or tuition by the other parents if their child goes to full-day kindergarten. We spoke to this issue yesterday and would continue to worry about our goal of a free appropriate public education for all students in Kansas.

Kansas NEA certainly supports the third bill, HB 2631. Increasing the number of at-risk preschool-aged children by 400 will lower the waiting lists in the districts. We would hope to erase the waiting lists, but realize that this would be difficult in this tight budget year. The Unified School Finance Coalition made this area one of our seven priorities to work on this session and we hope that the committee and legislature will adopt this policy.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of our thoughts on these three bills before the committee today.

House Education  
2-15-00  
Attachment 3



TO: House Committee on Education  
FROM: Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director for Advocacy  
DATE: February 15, 2000

**RE: Testimony on Early Childhood Education Programs**

*Summary of House Bill 2796:*

- Requires every public school district to develop and maintain an early childhood education program, which means a one-year pre-kindergarten program for children who are at least four years old and eligible for free meals, and a full day kindergarten for all students. (Sec. 2.a)
- Provides that districts may receive a state grant to assist in funding the additional cost of the program. To receive a grant, the State Board must approve the program. (Sec. 2 b.)
- State grants for this program are limited to 50% of the base budget per pupil multiplied by the number of students in these program eligible for free lunch. (Sec. 3)
- Allows districts to charge fees for students in full day kindergarten classes to charge fees to offset the additional costs of those classes. Such fees may only be collected to offset the costs of providing full day kindergarten classes that exceed the portion of those classes financed by the school finance system. (Sec. 6)
- Fees may not be charged to: (1) pupils who are required to attend such classes by law or the local board, (2) special education students required to attend such classes by their IEP, or (3) students who are eligible for free and reduced price meals. (Sec. 6)

*Summary of House Bill 2361:*

- Increases the number of children funded for pre-kindergarten at-risk programs from 1,794 to 2,184.

*KASB Position:*

We want to begin by applauding the focus on early childhood education contained in these bills. The School Finance Coalition has made early childhood support part of our package of priorities. There is broad, research-based support for these initiatives.

Specifically, we support the provisions of H.B. 2796 for state funding of preschool programs and all day kindergarten programs for children eligible for free meals. This would allow districts to expand services to low income children, who tend to begin school far behind their more advantaged peers. H.B. 2361 is a more modest proposal that would simply increase the number of state-funded preschool positions for students who qualify for free meals. We support any steps to increase the state's commitment to early childhood programs.

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Attachment 4



However, there are elements of H.B. 2791 that raise serious concerns.

First, it would represent a significant new mandate on public schools. It would require every district to offer pre-kindergarten instruction to every child eligible to free lunch, or about 25% of each grade. It would also require each district to offer full day kindergarten to every child. We support funding for districts that choose to provide such programs because research strongly supports the academic benefits of such programs. We believe that the vast majority of districts would choose to offer such programs if funds are available. But we do not believe that preschool and all day kindergarten should be required in all cases by every district.

Second, our opposition to this mandate would be reduced if the cost were fully funded. However, this bill does not guarantee that all costs will be covered. Although it would make available grants equal to half of the base budget for students eligible for free lunch in both preschool and full day kindergarten, it does not provide any funding for districts to expand facilities to provide these programs. To receive state grants, programs would have to be approved by the State Board, but districts would be required to operate these programs even if they were not approved for funding. Finally, the grant program would not be part of the regular school finance system; they would not be "built into the base" as they are in H.B. 2631. If the Legislature ever decided to reduce funding for these grants, the mandate would remain. (Special education funding comes to mind.)

Third, this bill would require districts to offer full day kindergarten programs for all students, but would only provide state funding for students who qualify for free lunch. Although this is a better situation than H.B. 2584, which allows the charging of fees without providing funding for low income children, we still believe that fees for full day kindergarten raises serious equity issues. As we previously noted, the burden will fall most heavily families of modest means who are not poor enough to qualify for free or reduced price meals, but for whom the cost of all day kindergarten fees would still be a difficulty. Fees would likely discourage many of these families from taking advantage of the program, even if their students would benefit.

We would state on this bill, as we did on H.B. 2584: if the state believes in equal educational opportunity and high levels of achievement for all, it should match that goal with resources. Fund full day kindergarten for all students who wish to participate.

***Conclusion:***

Many at risk children begin school far behind their peers. The only way to make up the difference is time and extra effort. Preschool and all day kindergarten provide that time and effort. But as the saying goes: time is money. Expanding preschool funding as provided in H.B. 2631 will cost money. Funding all at risk preschool and kindergarten students as provided in H.B. 2796 will cost more. Funding full day kindergarten for all students, as we support, will cost even more. But we recall that in 1992, the Legislature combined a wide range of school reform measures with a significant increase in school funding. This combination led to seven years of rising school and student performance. Money does matter. Combined with appropriate strategies and accountability, it makes a major difference. Without adequate funding, reform will fail. Increasing support for early childhood programs would be one of the best investments the Legislature can make. We urge you to remove the mandate and instead encourage districts to expand services based on community needs by funding preschool programs for all at risk children and all students in full day kindergarten programs.



**House Education Committee  
Representative Ralph Tanner, Chairman**

**Testimony on H.B. 2631 and H.B. 2796**

February 15, 2000

*Submitted by: Diane Gjerstad  
Wichita Public Schools*

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to rise in support of expansion of early childhood programs. During committee discussion in the past few weeks, several members of this committee have expressed support in early childhood education. But as the chairman has said before "the devil is in the details".

I rise in support of expansion of the four-year-old at risk grants found in H.B. 2631. The attached data shows a dramatic improvement in the tests given to four years at the beginning of the school year and at the end. Too often children from poverty are entering kindergarten not ready to learn and developmentally two years behind their peers.

Pre-k programs help bridge the educational chasm.

But early childhood educators would demand more. One year of pre-K is not enough. It needs to be combined with all-day kindergarten to help these kids catch up.

While H.B. 2796 is conceptually correct, the bill as written has several policy implications that I would take issue.

Mandates without adequate funding. This bill would require a pre-K program for all defined at risk students and all day K for every student. Grants may be available, conversely grants may not go far enough.

All day K somehow costs less than all day first grade or second grade. Maintaining a full time teacher costs the same per grade level in the primary grades. Districts that offer all day K are subsidizing the remaining half day. The .5 weighting is a hold over from a time when most districts only offered half day programs. It is time that the formula accurately reflected the costs.

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Attachment 5*

Grants are competitive for pre K and all day K funding. But on page 2, new section 3, (b) (1) line 22 the State Board is directed to consider the amount budgeted by the school district for early childhood programs. Does that imply that districts, like Wichita, are penalized because they directed scarce resources to all day K and pre K at a most aggressive rate?

The district would urge this committee to bring Kansas school finance into the new millennium by fully funding the cost of kindergarten and continue the expansion of the 4 year old at risk grant.

**Space** A very real problem for most districts would be space. Wichita Public Schools, like the suburban districts is over crowded. Mandating expansion of both pre K and all day K would add additional strain on over crowded buildings.

Wichita Public Schools has roughly 4,552 total kindergarten students (students have been added since September 20 official enrollment date)

All day K enrollment is about 3,725

Half day K enrollment is about 827

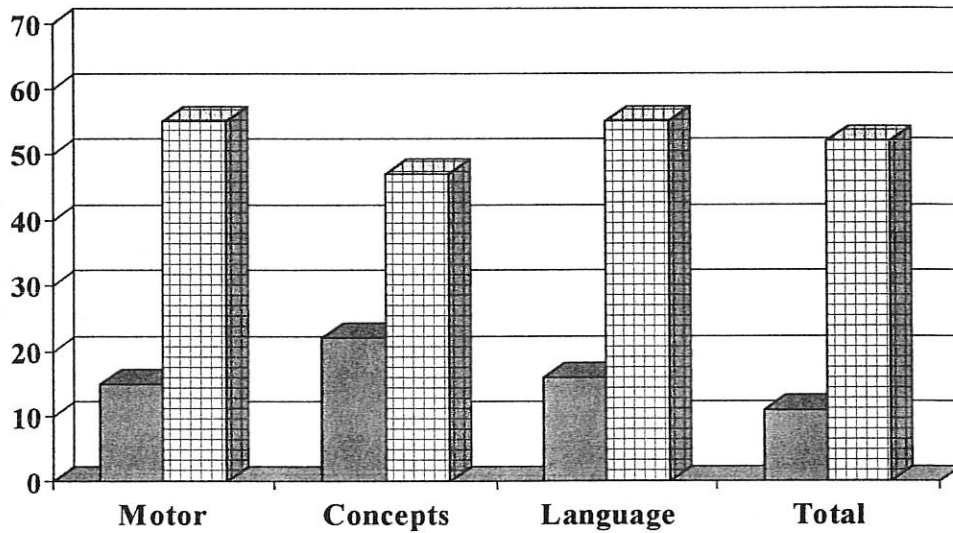
Mandating all day K would most likely double the half day enrollment. Assuming 20 students per kindergarten classroom that would require an additional 41 classrooms.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, it is obvious by the interest of legislators and parents that the time for all day kindergarten has arrived throughout Kansas. The school finance formula should be appropriately adjusted to fully weight a kindergarten student. The district would further encourage the continued expansion of the four year old at risk grant program.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would stand for questions.

# Pre-test and Post test DIAL-R Percentile Ranks for USD 259 Pre-Kindergarten

## 98-99 School Year



## 98-99 School Year

